

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations  
and is not a part of the Official Record

## **BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES**

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

**IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.**

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,  
please do not report the images to the  
Image Problem Mailbox.**

**Amendments to the Claims**

530 Claim 1-16 (cancelled without prejudice)

Claim 17 (New) A tonneau cover apparatus for removable attachment about a top of a perimeter of a cargo box of a pickup truck, the perimeter of the cargo box including a forward end, two opposing sidewalls and a tailgate, the tailgate being  
535 positioned rearward of the forward end, the tonneau cover apparatus comprising:

a flexible cover, the flexible cover having first and second ends;

a support frame for attachment to the cargo box; the support frame having two  
540 opposing side rails and a pair of end plate engagement members, each of which is secured to one of the respective opposing side rails in a position rearward of the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is attached to the cargo box;

an end plate attached to the second end of the flexible cover, the end plate  
545 configured to cooperatively engage the respective end plate engagement members when the flexible cover is drawn over the top of the perimeter of the cargo box; wherein the end plate engagement members cooperate to engage the end plate in a full engagement position when the first end of the flexible cover is operatively connected to the support frame forward of the respective end plate  
550 engagement members, such that the end plate is in a closed position when the

end plat is in the full engag ment position, wherein the flexible cover is stretched so as to place a tension on the flexible cover; and

a locking member, the locking member being secured to the end plate and  
555 movable between a first position and a second position when the end plate is in the closed position; wherein the locking member prevents the end plate from being disengaged from the closed position when the locking member is in the first position in which an extension of the locking member engages the side rail adjacent to the end plate to prevent such movement, and wherein the end plate  
560 can be disengaged from the closed position when the locking member is in the second position.

Claim 18 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the end plate has an underside and the locking member is operatively connected to  
565 the underside of the end plate.

Claim 19 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the locking member is spring biased toward the first position.

570 Claim 20 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the tonneau cover apparatus includes an elongated member attached to the locking member such that force can be placed upon the locking member by pulling the elongated member in opposition to a spring biasing force biasing the locking

memb r toward the first position by drawing the locking member away from the  
575 first position toward the second position.

Claim 21 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the  
locking member is spring biased toward the first position and the locking member  
is operatively connected to an underside of the end plate and positioned in such  
580 a manner that the support frame displaces the locking member from the first  
position to the second position for a brief period of time when the end plate pivots  
with respect to the support frame into the fixed stretching position.

Claim 22 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, the locking  
585 member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further  
includes a second locking member, each of the respective first and second  
locking members being secured to the end plate proximate respective opposite  
ends of the end plate; wherein each of the opposing side rails include an inwardly  
extending flange portion and each locking member includes a finger portion, the  
590 finger portion of each locking member being engaged with the inwardly extending  
flange portion of the respective opposing side rail when the respective locking  
member is in a first position, the finger portion of each of the respective locking  
members disengaging from the inwardly extending flange portion of the  
respective side rail when the respective locking member is moved from the first  
595 position to a second position.

Claim 23 (N w) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 22, wh r in  
each of the respective first and second locking members is biased toward the  
first position and force is required to displace the respective first and second  
600 locking members from the first position.

Claim 24 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the  
end plate includes a pair of springs, each spring interconnected between the end  
plate and one of the locking members so as to provide a biasing force between  
605 the end plate and the respective locking member such that each of the respective  
locking members are biased toward the first position.

Claim 25 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the  
tonneau cover apparatus includes first and second elongated members attached  
610 to each of the respective locking members such that force can be placed upon  
each respective locking member by pulling each of the respective elongated  
members in opposition to a respective spring biasing force biasing each of the  
respective locking members toward the respective first positions by drawing each  
of the respective locking members away from the respective first position toward  
615 the respective second position.

Claim 26 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the  
respective springs are selected from the group consisting of compression springs  
and tension springs.

620

Claim 27 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the spring is a tension spring.

625

Claim 28 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the spring is a compression spring.

630

Claim 29 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the side rail includes an inwardly extending flange portion and the locking member includes an outwardly extended finger portion, the finger portion of the locking member being engaged with the inwardly extending flange portion adjacent to the end plate and rearward of the respective first and second engagement positions with respect to the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is attached to the cargo box and the locking member is in the first position, the finger portion of the locking member disengaging from the inwardly extending flange portion when the locking member is moved from the first position to the second position.

635

640

Claim 30 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, the locking member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further including a second locking member that is a functional and structural mirror image of the first locking member when operatively connected to the end plate,

the second locking member being secured to one end of the end plate and the first locking member being secured to the opposite end of the end plate.

645 Claim 31 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first position.

650

Claim 32 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the locking member has an upper portion having a main body which is slidably retained by the end plate, the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion, and  
655 the locking member is biased toward the first position and force is required to displace the locking members from the first position.

Claim 33 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end  
660 plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first position.

Claim 34 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the

665 spring is select d from the group consisting of compression springs and tension  
springs.

Claim 35 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the  
spring is a tension spring.

670

Claim 36 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the  
spring is a compression spring.

Claim 37 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the  
675 locking member includes an upper portion having a main body which is slidably  
retained by the end plate, and the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper  
portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion.

Claim 38 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the  
680 end plate includes a generally "T" shaped channel and a cross-section of the  
upper portion of the locking member is generally "T" shaped, the generally "T"  
shaped channel of the end plate configured to slidably receive and retain the  
generally "T" shaped cross-section of the upper portion.

685 Claim 39 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 38, further  
including oppositely disposed guide strips positioned between interior surfaces of  
the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T"



shaped upper portion of the locking member, the respective guide strips each  
imparting a frictional force which resists motion between the generally "T" shaped  
690 upper position of the locking member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped  
channel of the end plate.

Claim 40 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the  
generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member includes a friction  
695 imparting element and two oppositely opposed guide strips, the friction imparting  
element extending beyond the main body of the generally "T" shaped upper  
portion of the locking member to slidingly engage an interior surface of the  
generally "T" shaped channel, the friction imparting element and the respective  
guide strips creating frictional forces which resist motion by the locking member  
700 as the locking member moves relative to the end plate.

Claim 41 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 38, further  
including a friction imparting element positioned between an interior surface of  
the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T"  
705 shaped upper portion of the locking member to which the friction imparting  
element is attached, the friction imparting element imparting a frictional force  
which resists motion by the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking  
member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped channel of the end plate.

710 Claim 42 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the

friction imparting element is attached to an exterior surface of the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member and the exterior surface of the upper element onto which the friction imparting element is attached is a top surface.

715 Claim 43 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the friction imparting element comprises a strip of a loop portion of a hook and loop type strip fastener, the strip extending along the longitudinal extent of the upper member.

720 Claim 44 (New) A tonneau cover apparatus for removable attachment about a top of a perimeter of a cargo box of a pickup truck, the perimeter of the cargo box including a forward end, two opposing sidewalls and a tailgate, the tailgate being positioned rearward of the forward end, the tonneau cover apparatus comprising:

725 a flexible cover, the flexible cover having first and second ends;

a support frame for attachment to the cargo box; the support frame having two opposing side rails and a pair of end plate engagement members, each of which is secured to one of the respective opposing side rails in a position rearward of  
730 the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is attached to the cargo box;

an end plate attached to the second end of the flexible cover, the end plate configured to cooperatively engage the respective end plate engagement

members when the flexible cover is drawn over the top of the perimeter of the  
735 cargo box; wherein the end plate engagement members cooperate to engage the  
end plate in a full engagement position when the first end of the flexible cover is  
operatively connected to the support frame forward of the respective end plate  
engagement members, such that the end plate is in a closed position when the  
end plate is in the full engagement position, wherein the flexible cover is  
740 stretched so as to place a tension on the flexible cover; and

a locking member, the locking member being slidably secured within a channel  
within the end plate and movable between a first position and a second position  
when the end plate is in the closed position; wherein the locking member  
745 prevents the end plate from being disengaged from the closed position when the  
locking member is in the first position in which an extension of the locking  
member engages the side rail adjacent to the end plate to prevent such  
movement, and wherein the end plate can be disengaged from the closed  
position when the locking member is in the second position.

750

Claim 45 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the  
end plate has an underside and the locking member is operatively connected to  
the underside of the end plate.

755 Claim 46 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the  
locking member is spring biased toward the first position.

Claim 47 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the tonneau cover apparatus includes an elongated member attached to the locking member such that force can be placed upon the locking member by pulling the elongated member in opposition to a spring biasing force biasing the locking member toward the first position by drawing the locking member away from the first position toward the second position.

Claim 48 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the locking member is spring biased toward the first position and the locking member is operatively connected to an underside of the end plate and positioned in such a manner that the support frame displaces the locking member from the first position to the second position for a brief period of time when the end plate pivots with respect to the support frame into the fixed stretching position.

Claim 49 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, the locking member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further includes a second locking member, each of the respective first and second locking members being secured to the end plate proximate respective opposite ends of the end plate; wherein each of the opposing side rails include an inwardly extending flange portion and each locking member includes a finger portion, the finger portion of each locking member being engaged with the inwardly extending flange portion of the respective opposing side rail when the respective locking

780 member is in a first position, the finger portion of each of the respective locking members disengaging from the inwardly extending flange portion of the respective side rail when the respective locking member is moved from the first position to a second position.

785 Claim 50 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 49, wherein each of the respective first and second locking members is biased toward the first position and force is required to displace the respective first and second locking members from the first position.

790 Claim 51 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 50, wherein the end plate includes a pair of springs, each spring interconnected between the end plate and one of the locking members so as to provide a biasing force between the end plate and the respective locking member such that each of the respective locking members are biased toward the first position.

795

Claim 52 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 51, wherein the tonneau cover apparatus includes first and second elongated members attached to each of the respective locking members such that force can be placed upon each respective locking member by pulling each of the respective elongated members in opposition to a respective spring biasing force biasing each of the  
800 respective locking members toward the respective first positions by drawing each

of the respective locking members away from the respective first position toward the respective second position.

805 Claim 53 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 52, wherein the respective springs are selected from the group consisting of compression springs and tension springs.

Claim 54 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 53, wherein the  
810 spring is a tension spring.

Claim 55 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 53, wherein the spring is a compression spring.

815 Claim 56 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the side rail includes an inwardly extending flange portion and the locking member includes an outwardly extended finger portion, the finger portion of the locking member being engaged with the inwardly extending flange portion adjacent to the end plate and rearward of the respective first and second engagement  
820 positions with respect to the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is attached to the cargo box and the locking member is in the first position, the finger portion of the locking member disengaging from the inwardly extending flange portion when the locking member is moved from the first position to the second position.

825

Claim 57 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, the locking member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further including a second locking member that is a functional and structural mirror image of the first locking member when operatively connected to the end plate, the second locking member being secured to one end of the end plate and the first locking member being secured to the opposite end of the end plate.

830

Claim 58 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first position.

835

Claim 59 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the locking member has an upper portion having a main body which is slidably retained by the end plate, the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion, and the locking member is biased toward the first position and force is required to displace the locking members from the first position.

840

845

Claim 60 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 59, wherein the end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end

plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end  
plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first  
850 position.

Claim 61 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 60, wherein the  
spring is selected from the group consisting of compression springs and tension  
springs.

855

Claim 62 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the  
spring is a tension spring.

Claim 63 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the  
860 spring is a compression spring.

Claim 64 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the  
locking member includes an upper portion having a main body which is slidably  
retained by the end plate, and the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper  
865 portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion.

Claim 65 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the  
end plate includes a generally "T" shaped channel and a cross-section of the  
upper portion of the locking member is generally "T" shaped, the generally "T"  
870 shaped channel of the end plate configured to slidably receive and retain the



generally "T" shaped cross-section of the upper portion.

Claim 66 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 65, further including oppositely disposed guide strips positioned between interior surfaces of the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member, the respective guide strips each imparting a frictional force which resists motion between the generally "T" shaped upper position of the locking member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped channel of the end plate.

880

Claim 67 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 65, wherein the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member includes a friction imparting element and two oppositely opposed guide strips, the friction imparting element extending beyond the main body of the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member to slidingly engage an interior surface of the generally "T" shaped channel, the friction imparting element and the respective guide strips creating frictional forces which resist motion by the locking member as the locking member moves relative to the end plate.

890 Claim 68 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 65, further including a friction imparting element positioned between an interior surface of the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member to which the friction imparting

element is attached, the friction imparting element imparting a frictional force  
895 which resists motion by the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking  
member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped channel of the end plate.

Claim 69 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 68, wherein the  
900 friction imparting element is attached to an exterior surface of the generally "T"  
shaped upper portion of the locking member and the exterior surface of the upper  
element onto which the friction imparting element is attached is a top surface.

Claim 70 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 69, wherein the  
905 friction imparting element comprises a strip of a loop portion of a hook and loop  
type strip fastener, the strip extending along the longitudinal extent of the upper  
member.

910 In th Drawings

Please replace the original drawings with the formal drawings enclosed herewith.